

Reviewer A:

I do appreciate the authors taking a lot of effort to address many of my detailed comments. I have to admit that it would have been easier to track the changes if, in their document on responses to review, the authors included the new page numbers where these revisions were made. However, they were mostly satisfactory.

I have just a few comments below.

1. I think that the main issue mentioned by the Editor has not been addressed. Even protocol papers need to include literature review background that situates the new project in the context of the existing state of knowledge and justify the new study. The existing background section really only describes this particular census database. I therefore believe that Introduction needs to be somewhat revised to make the case that this project and resulting research will bring new knowledge.

*We appreciate this feedback, and we have now restructured the background this project and planned work in the current state of knowledge.*

2. With the exception of 2 sentences on page 3 there is no information about what kind of studies could be conducted using this database. I will leave it to the Editor to decide whether it is sufficient.

*Thank you for this comment. We continue to include language in the front end about ongoing studies that are using the currently available linked confidential census data. While only a few sentences, we feel they succinctly capture the power of these data for research in the future.*

3. I do not believe that the last paragraph on page 4 is required.

*We removed this paragraph.*

4. My other minor point is regarding my request for more information about the Census – I was asking on behalf of all readers unfamiliar with it, so this information, as well as relevant references, needs to be included \*in the paper,\* not only in the response to review. (my comment and response copied below)

*We are sorry for misinterpreting your question in the initial review. We have now included this information in the background section.*

It would also be helpful to explain whether the Census is (and has been) mandatory in the US, and what is the % of population that completes it; and who might be missing. The U.S. Census is a mandatory survey with estimated coverage rates ranging from 93.5% in 1880 to 98.6% in 1980. See Miriam King and Diana Magnusson, “Perspectives on Historical U.S. Census Undercounts”, *Social Science History* 1995 (19:4) 455-466.

5. P17 – please explain (in the paper) what the “ground truth” means.

*We have removed this phrase because it was confusing and unnecessary. The following paragraph describes how we intend use the PSID to evaluate the quality of our census linkages.*

6. Finally, there are many acronyms that are not intuitive (at least for this reviewer). It might be useful to have a list of them as the first table.

*We are sorry for the confusion. We are trying to keep our word count tight, and paper succinct.*

*We reviewed the paper carefully to ensure all acronyms are specified accurately at their first introduction.*